

From: Ian Johnson
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/26/02 1:59am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To Whom it May Concern:

I am not involved in the computer industry. I am an ordinary citizen and end-user of computer software and just wanted to take a moment to voice my strong objection to the proposed Microsoft settlement.

It takes only a very basic understanding of Microsoft's history to understand that they have succeeded not through innovation but through aggressive and anti-competitive business practices. From the very beginning, in the mid 70s when Bill Gates purchased MS-DOS from a small software company in Seattle and made billions reselling something that cost him about \$50,000, to the opening of Apple's Macintosh operating system in Windows and all subsequent OS releases, Bill Gates has been a copycat, a thief maybe, but not an innovator. Every single product they have ever released has been "inspired" by something that came before.

The operating system monopoly that Microsoft enjoys has given them the leverage to thwart upstart competitors. We all know and acknowledge this. The proposed slap on the wrist makes it apparent that antitrust laws have no teeth. Without a punishment that fits the crime, there is no disincentive for other companies now and in the future to avoid running afoul of antitrust laws.

I resent the millions of taxpayer dollars spent over many years in an effort that apparently will result in a conclusion that antitrust laws were violated but that it's OK to let Microsoft off easy, once again.

Those who believe in the free market as an absolute have no understanding of American history and no appreciation for the need for antitrust laws in our highly successful form of capitalism.

sincerely,

Ian Russell Johnson
Corvallis, Oregon